

MINUTES

Thursday, June 11, 2015



Sioux Falls
Human Relations
Commission

12 Noon—1 p.m.
Commission Room
First Floor, City Hall

Commissioners:

Present: Brennan, Haase, Harkness, Jones, Larson, Mortenson, Ramirez, Wood

Absent: Bouwman, Pagan-Rosario, Scere

Staff: Colleen Moran, Human Relations Manager; Tina Lemieux, Human Relations Technician; and Vandhana Baireddy, Human Rights Community Coordinator

DAC Member Present: Walter Schaefer

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Haase called the meeting to order at 12:07 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mortenson moved to approve the April 09, 2015 and May 14, 2015 meeting minutes. Harkness seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Civil Rights Update

Cases included a claim of discrimination based on disability. The largest housing co-op in the United States, located in New York, employed an overly burdensome and intrusive policy governing waivers to its "no pets" rule, which has deterred and prevented people with disabilities from obtaining reasonable accommodations such as service animals. The housing co-op required individuals to complete five forms, two of which needed to be completed in blue ink and type-written. The co-op also specific the type of breed individuals could have and required all service animals to be spayed or neutered. In addition, individuals requesting such an accommodation were required to provide medical records. As part the lawsuit, the co-op has been ordered to pay a \$50,000 civil penalty.

A second case involved sex discrimination. A woman recently began to present as a woman while at work. Her employer refused to address her as a woman and consistently referred to her as a "he." In addition, the employer refused to let her use the women's restroom. The lawsuit is currently under litigation; however, in April 2015, a similar lawsuit awarded the complainant \$150,000.

4. Appointment of Case Panel A

Bouwman, Harkness, Larson, Ramirez, Scere

5. Continuing Business

A. Outreach Committee:

Festival of Cultures: the volunteer schedule is complete and all shifts have been filled. The following items will be present at the event: pens, totes, business cards, a replica of the Humanitarian Awards, Humanitarian Award Nomination forms, and Humanitarian Award Call for Nominations forms.

Pride Festival: Saturday, June 20, 2015. All volunteer shifts have been filled. This is the first year of attendance for the Commission.

The ADA 25th Anniversary Celebration: The event will take place on July 13th. The ADA registration form is currently on the Human Relations website. The agenda will be posted. The registration form and agendas will be sent to Commissioners.

Upcoming event opportunities include: Pride Festival on June 20, 2015; Humanitarian Awards on Monday, October 26, 2015 at the Orpheum. The nomination form will be posted to the Human Relations' website.

B. Communications Committee:

The Communications Committee met to discuss outreach and PR efforts. Current marketing materials were reviewed. The Communications Committee also discussed developing a tool for employees to use when they feel they are being discriminated against (how to document, when, why, etc.).

Moran reported that she and Baireddy attended the Banquet on Monday June 8th to bring awareness to the Human Relations Commission. She reported that over 400 people were in attendance.

6. New Business –

7. Disability Awareness Commission Report (Walter Schaefer presented the report):

A. The May DAC meeting was cancelled. No additional report to give.

8. Public Comment –

No public present.

9. Adjournment

Having no further business Jones moved to adjourn; Wood seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tina Lemieux.